



## EVALUATING RESEARCH CULTURE IN A STATE UNIVERSITY: A DESCRIPTIVE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS IN WESTERN VISAYAS, PHILIPPINES

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### ABSTRACT

This descriptive quantitative analysis of the research culture at a state university focuses on the research environment (reputation, income, and productivity) and research quality (citation impact, strength, excellence, and influence). A total of 318 respondents were selected for the quantitative phase through stratified sampling. Data were collected using an 80-item validated and reliable researcher-developed survey instrument (CVR = 0.93;  $\alpha$  = 0.989) and a semi-structured interview guide. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and SD). Findings were analyzed across key indicators, including research infrastructure, income, productivity, reputation, citation impact, research strength, research excellence, and research influence. Results showed that the research environment was highly evident ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ), with strong performance in research infrastructure and research reputation, indicating well-established institutional support systems and academic standing. Research income and productivity were evident, suggesting consistent but developing levels of funding generation and scholarly output. In terms of research quality, the overall level was evident ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ), with citation impact and research influence performing relatively better than research strength and research excellence. These findings indicate that the university maintains a structured and functioning research culture, characterized by supportive systems and consistent research practices, while highlighting areas that may benefit from further enhancement. The study provides a descriptive baseline for understanding research culture in higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** *Research culture, research environment, research quality, descriptive analysis, state university, Philippines*

### Introduction

Research culture in higher education institutions globally is a multifaceted concept encompassing processes and norms (Olvido, 2020). It is cultivated through various strategies, including creating research governance tools, reinforcing desired behaviors, building capacity, supporting dissemination, and promoting collaboration (Fussy, 2024). That said, Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), prominent global university ranking organizations, have developed extensive business lines around their rankings (Lim, 2021). These rankings significantly influence students' choices and higher education policies worldwide (Dobos et al., 2022). As such, higher education institutions (HEIs) play a crucial role in addressing the global need for research to produce knowledge and promote social, technological, and pedagogical research (Bakshi, 2023). The need for SCOPUS, Web of Science, and ISI-indexed research in higher education institutions is driven by their role in quality assurance and international rankings. These databases serve as key indicators of research performance and impact (Smirnova, 2021).

Moreover, ASEAN University Network (AUN) emphasizes the pivotal role of research in higher education institutions (HEIs) across Southeast Asia, promoting and cultivating academic and research cooperation among member universities (ASEAN University Network, 2024). ASEAN countries enhance research productivity and higher education development to boost innovation and competitiveness. Singapore leads in publication quality and patents, while Malaysia produces the most scientific research (Sukoco et al., 2023). ASEAN regionalism offers mechanisms to improve university research performance (Lorenzo, 2021). Factors influencing higher education development in



ASEAN include initiatives by regional and international organizations (Ma et al., 2022). The region's higher education sector is evolving, emphasizing sustainability, innovative teaching approaches, graduate employability, access and equity, and curriculum development (Crosling et al., 2024). Despite progress, Southeast Asia's contribution to global educational research remains modest compared to leading countries. Across disciplines, there is a trend of publishing in lower-tier journals for emerging countries (Barrot, 2021; Thao et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, higher education institutions are mandated to perform their trifocal functions, provide instruction, conduct research in order to generate new knowledge, and engage in extension activities in order for communities to benefit from the knowledge generated and technology developed by HEIs (CHED, Memorandum Order No. 48 s. 2016). Additionally, graduate schools are advised to constitute a level of academic work that focus on professional experience via internships, teaching and research and production of original research or work (CHED Memorandum Order No. 15 s. 2019). Meanwhile, research productivity in Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) faces challenges but shows promising trends. While the number of Scopus-indexed publications from Philippine HEIs is relatively low (Rogayan & Corpuz, 2022), research output and international collaborations have increased (Gopez et al., 2024). A study of Philippine Quality Award (PQA) recipients revealed that HEIs struggle with customer engagement, financial results, and workforce engagement (Barlan, 2023).

One institution in Region VI has positioned itself as a research university fostering research excellence through its comprehensive programs, infrastructure, and policies. This institution aims to create, innovate, and generate new knowledge and technology through research engagements and creative outputs. Specifically, it aims to enhance faculty research competency, improve research quality, productivity, and impact, and disseminate and utilize research outputs (West Visayas State University, 2024). However, to fully realize these goals, higher education institutions must strengthen their overall research culture, as they often face challenges such as limited time and a lack of training, fear of rejection, lack of interest, limited funds, and lack of institutional support (Quitonas & Abuso, 2021).

Research culture in Philippine higher education institutions has been a focus of recent studies. Roxas-Soriano et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of establishing operational research centers. Quitonas and Abuso (2021) identified the significance of best practices in developing research culture in universities, emphasizing the role of academic leaders. Rogayan and Corpuz (2022) noted that faculty researchers have relatively high productivity in international publications but lower output in Scopus-indexed and CHED-accredited journals. Findings across multiple regions revealed that while faculty members demonstrate growing engagement in research, challenges persist in publication productivity, research funding, and capacity-building initiatives (Rogayan & Corpuz, 2022; Monsura et al., 2022; Nieves et al., 2024). Across state universities in the Philippines, research indicates that approximately 25% or fewer of faculty actively engage in research. Monsura et al. (2022) found that the average faculty participation rate in research activities was below 26%, with almost three-quarters (75%) of faculty not participating in any research activities. Obliopas et al. (2020) corroborated this trend, revealing that only 43% of required faculty members were actively undertaking research. The evidence suggests that a supportive research environment—characterized by mentorship, recognition, and continuous professional development—is essential in enhancing faculty research competence and institutional performance (Camilon et al., 2024; Dela Peña, 2024; Hipolito & Santos, 2025). So far, few studies have used a mixed-methods approach to examine the research culture of state universities and colleges in Western Visayas. This particular gap in the literature is what this study sought to fill.

Thus, this study assessed the level of research culture of a state university in Western Visayas during 2025-2026 in the areas of research environment with indicators such as research reputation, research income, and research productivity, and in the research quality with the indicators on citation impact, research strength, research excellence, and research influence. The study's findings served as a basis for the researcher's proposed strategic research plan to continuously improve the research culture of a state university in Western Visayas.

### ***Research Design***



This study adopted a descriptive research design to advance an empirical understanding of research culture in a state university in Western Visayas during the 2025–2026 academic year, with a focused examination of research environment and research quality as foundational dimensions shaping institutional research culture and scholarly excellence.

*Respondents.* The study respondents were administrators and faculty members of a state university and its satellite campuses in Western Visayas during 2025-2026. They are currently employed, making them suitable participants. Using stratified, proportionate random sampling and the fishbowl technique, 318 participants were selected using an online sample size calculator with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

**Table 2**  
*Distribution of Respondents*

Administrators	N	n	%
Campus A	27	22	36.07
Campus B	8	7	11.48
Campus C	8	7	11.48
Campus D	7	6	9.84
Campus E	8	7	11.48
Campus F	7	6	9.84
Campus G	7	6	9.84
Total	72	61	100.00
<b>Faculty</b>			
Campus A	380	127	49.42
Campus B	29	10	3.89
Campus C	118	39	15.18
Campus D	91	30	11.67
Campus E	21	7	2.72
Campus F	112	37	14.40
Campus G	22	7	2.72
Total	773	257	100.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Research instrument.* The study used a researcher-developed survey questionnaire with statements on the research environment—including infrastructure, reputation, income, and productivity—and on research quality indicators such as citation impact, strength, excellence, and influence. Likert statements measured research culture at a state university. Since it was developed by the researcher, it underwent content validation using Lawshe’s CVR (0.93), indicating high validity, and pilot testing among administrators and faculty showed excellent reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.989). The scale helped interpret results.

**Table 3**  
*Scale of interpretation for the level of research culture*

Level	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.26-4.00	Highly Evident	The research culture is highly evident and consistently practiced as evidenced in the research environment and research quality of the state university



3	2.51-3.25	Evident	The research culture is evident and regularly practiced, as evidenced in the research environment and research quality of the state university
2	1.76-2.50	Somewhat Evident	The research culture is somewhat evident and with inconsistent practices in the implementation as evidenced in the research environment and research quality of the state university
1	1.00-1.75	Not Evident at all	The research culture is barely evident and rarely practiced, as evidenced in the research environment and research quality of the state university.

*Data collection procedure.* Quantitative data collection began with obtaining permission from the university president via the research ethics committee. After approval, assistance was sought from the research and development center. Letters with informed consent and survey materials, both hard copy and online, were sent to campus administrators and college deans. Once approved, questionnaires were distributed, and the survey commenced. Follow-ups ensured timely completion over the course of nearly a month. The researcher collected all responses, which were then tabulated and analyzed with statistical software by an accredited statistician.

*Data analysis.* Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the quantitative data. Frequency count and percentage distribution profiled participants. The mean and standard deviation were used to assess the research culture of a state university regarding the research environment and quality.

*Ethical considerations.* To ensure the ethical soundness of the study, the researcher adhered to the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB) ethical guidelines and addressed the general principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Likewise, it secured an ethics approval from the socio-behavioral science research ethics review committee of WVSU with approval code of 2025-095-INS.

*Social value.* The value of research today requires higher education institutions to promote a research culture, highlighting the roles of administrators and faculty as lead researchers. This study examined the research culture of a Western Visayas state university, providing a basis for a research strategic plan to achieve research university status by 2030. It identified challenges faced by participants that university officials can address and added to existing literature on research culture for the academic community's benefit.

*Informed consent.* Participation was voluntary; participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. They signed an informed consent form, which explained the research and confirmed their understanding. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary and that there would be no negative consequences if they declined.

*Vulnerability, risks, and benefits.* This study involved adults capable of making decisions, so vulnerability is of limited concern. Risks include physical exhaustion, mental discomfort, or inconvenience during data collection, but mitigation measures, such as allowing participants to pause or withdraw, are in place. Risks are minimal, and debriefing ensures participants leave informed and supported. The study benefits the local academic community by strengthening research culture, supporting system improvements, and guiding faculty development policies, ultimately boosting research capacity and quality.

*Privacy and confidentiality.* Participants' data were handled securely per the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Personal data remained confidential, with no identities disclosed or published without consent. Materials were properly disposed of after use, with pseudonyms used to protect identities. The researcher accessed data via password protection on a laptop, and all personal records were destroyed after five years, with digital data permanently deleted and hard copies shredded two weeks after the final defense to ensure confidentiality.

## Results and Discussion

### Level of research culture in a state university in terms of the research environment



This section presents the level of research culture in terms of research environment across four key dimensions: research infrastructure, research income, research reputation, and research productivity. Overall, the research environment received a mean score of 3.26 (SD = 0.49), indicating a highly evident level (Table 3). This indicates that research-related structures, systems, and practices are strongly established and consistently implemented within the university.

Among the dimensions, research infrastructure recorded the highest mean ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ), followed by research reputation ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ), both of which were interpreted as highly evident. These results suggest that the university possesses well-developed physical and organizational resources, as well as a recognized academic standing. The presence of a centralized research and development office, regular faculty training, and access to digital tools and databases supports this finding. The existing literature emphasizes that institutional resources, leadership support, and technological integration are critical for strengthening research environments and enhancing academic outcomes (Ryazanova & Jaškiene, 2022; Gangwani & Aleesa, 2024). The alignment of these institutional practices with established research support mechanisms indicates a stable and supportive research environment.

In contrast, research productivity ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ) and research income ( $M = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) were both rated as evident. These findings indicate that while research outputs and funding-related activities are regularly practiced, they are less pronounced compared to infrastructure and reputation. The university demonstrates consistent scholarly output supported by incentives, publication policies, and funding assistance for conference participation. Previous studies note that structured policies, incentives, and funding mechanisms positively influence research productivity (Kanaabi et al., 2022). However, the relatively lower rating of research income suggests that income-generating activities, such as commercialization and external funding acquisition, are still developing.

Existing literature highlights that effective research income generation requires diversified strategies, including industry partnerships, intellectual property development, and technology transfer systems (Tweheyo et al., 2022; Wekesa et al., 2024). While the university has established offices such as the Knowledge and Technology Transfer and Business Development Center and business incubation initiatives, the findings suggest that these mechanisms are still maturing. Strengthening external linkages and expanding commercialization pathways may enhance research income over time. Taken together, these findings indicate that the university's research environment is well-established, with strong foundational support systems. However, translating these structural strengths into higher levels of productivity and income remains an area for further development.

**Table 3**

*Level of research culture in a state university in terms of the research environment*

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Research Infrastructure	3.32	0.47	Highly Evident
Research Income	3.16	0.65	Evident
Research Reputation	3.28	0.53	Highly Evident
Research Productivity	3.23	0.60	Evident
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>Highly Evident</b>

*Mean Range: 1.00-1.75= Not Evident at all, 1.76-2.50= Somewhat Evident, 2.51-3.25= Evident, 3.26-4.00=Highly Evident*

#### **Level of research culture in a state university in terms of research quality**

The level of research culture in terms of research quality across four dimensions: citation impact, research strength, research excellence, and research influence shows that the overall mean for research quality was 3.14 (SD = 0.59), indicating evident research quality (Table 4). This suggests that research outputs are of consistent quality and are regularly produced, although there remains room for further strengthening.



Among the indicators, citation impact ( $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) and research influence ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ) recorded the highest ratings, both interpreted as evident. These findings indicate that the university's research outputs are recognized and utilized within academic and, to some extent, applied contexts. Citation monitoring practices and access to indexed databases help faculty improve publication visibility. Literature affirms that citation metrics serve as indicators of research quality and scholarly recognition (Aksnes et al., 2023). The findings suggest that the university's research outputs contribute to ongoing academic discourse and demonstrate measurable impact.

Meanwhile, research strength ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) and research excellence ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ) were also interpreted as evident, though comparatively lower than other dimensions. These results indicate that while the university maintains acceptable levels of academic rigor and output, there is variability in achieving higher levels of specialization and distinction. Institutional practices such as peer review, mentoring programs, and training initiatives help maintain research quality. Prior studies emphasize that capacity building, funding, and collaborative engagement are essential in strengthening research performance (Bara et al., 2025; Quitoras & Abuso, 2021).

The findings also reflect the role of collaboration and institutional recognition in shaping research excellence. Engagement in international partnerships and participation in global rankings contribute to research visibility and benchmarking. Studies suggest that research output, collaboration, and citation performance are key determinants of institutional research standing (Akter et al., 2024; Grinchenko & Shaposhnikov, 2025). However, the descriptive results indicate that these aspects are present but not yet maximized.

Overall, the results suggest that the university sustains a consistent level of research quality, supported by institutional mechanisms and academic practices. However, the relatively moderate levels of research strength and excellence indicate that further development in specialized research areas and high-impact outputs may be observed.

**Table 4**

*Level of research culture in a state university in terms of research quality*

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Citation Impact	3.25	0.63	Evident
Research Strength	3.05	0.70	Evident
Research Excellence	3.02	0.75	Evident
Research Influence	3.17	0.64	Evident
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>Evident</b>

*Mean Range: 1.00-1.75= Not Evident at all, 1.76-2.50= Somewhat Evident, 2.51-3.25= Evident, 3.26-4.00=Highly Evident*

*Synthesis.* Across both domains, the findings show that the university's research culture is consistently practiced and structurally supported. The research environment demonstrates a stronger manifestation than research quality, suggesting that institutional systems and resources are well established. In contrast, research quality indicators, while evident, reflect ongoing development in achieving higher levels of academic distinction. This pattern indicates that while the university has successfully built a supportive research environment, the outcomes in terms of productivity, income, and advanced research quality are still evolving. The alignment between institutional support and research outputs highlights the importance of sustaining existing systems while continuing to strengthen research-related practices.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the state university demonstrates a highly evident research environment, reflecting strong institutional structures, support systems, and research-related resources that facilitate scholarly activities. The consistent availability of infrastructure, leadership support, and institutional mechanisms sustains research practice within the university. In terms of research income and productivity, the findings indicate an evident level, suggesting



that research activities and outputs are regularly carried out, although not at the highest level of manifestation. Similarly, the results for research quality show an evident level, with citation impact and research influence reflecting consistent academic recognition and utilization of research outputs. Meanwhile, research strength and research excellence, while evident, indicate areas where higher levels of development may still be observed. Overall, the findings describe a research culture that is established and consistently practiced, supported by institutional systems and resources, and reflected in the university's research environment and research quality.

### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by its descriptive research design, which focuses on describing the current state of research culture rather than examining relationships or causal effects among variables. The findings are also confined to a single state university, which may limit their applicability to other institutional contexts. In addition, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to individual perceptions and response bias. Furthermore, the scope of the study is restricted to selected dimensions of the research environment and research quality, and does not include other possible aspects of research culture.

### Practical Value of the Paper

This study offers practical value by providing a descriptive overview of the current state of research culture at a state university, which may serve as a reference for institutional assessment and planning. The findings help university administrators and research offices identify strengths in the research environment and areas for improvement in research income, productivity, and quality. The study also provides baseline information to support the development of policies, programs, and initiatives to sustain and enhance research-related practices within higher education institutions.

### Directions for Future Research

Future research may extend this study by conducting comparative assessments across multiple universities to provide broader perspectives on research culture in higher education. Researchers may also explore additional dimensions of research culture not covered in this study to provide a more comprehensive description. Mixed-methods approaches may further enrich understanding by incorporating qualitative insights alongside quantitative findings. Longitudinal studies may also be conducted to describe changes in research culture over time.

### Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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